

Early Years Team

Supporting your child to ask for 'help'

'Help' is a really important word for your child to know as it is functional. Often, we help children before they have asked for it because we know that they are struggling and might not have the language skills to verbally ask for help. For some children, it is useful to set up opportunities where the child needs to ask for help

For example:

Toys

Put favourite toys in clear boxes so that your child can see them but cannot open the box – wait for him to show you that he would like help to open the box (e.g. giving the box to you, throwing the box etc) before getting down to his level and model 'help'.

Clothes

When putting your child's shoes on, put the one shoe on and leave the other one next to him. Wait or him to show that he would like help putting his other shoe on before modelling 'help'.

When going outside, give your child his coat but do not automatically put it on for him. Again, wait until he has shown you that he would like help with his coat before modelling 'help'.

Do the unexpected

When giving you child a drink, you could put a jug on the table with his juice in but do not automatically fill up his cup. Wait for him to indicate that he wants some juice (e.g. reaching for the jug, shouting and holding his cup up etc) before modelling the word or sign for help and pouring him a small amount. - Then wait for him to finish that small amount of juice before again waiting for him to show that he wants 'more'

It does not matter if your child does not say "help" as they might use non-verbal communication to communicate this instead (e.g. reaching, grabbing, vocalising or looking at the object). With time, your child should learn that in order to gain help, they must first communicate in some way. You can then use that opportunity to model the word or sign for 'help'.

Please do not ask your child to copy this word after you, they will start to use this word when they are ready.